

Tsoureki bread (Greek Easter bread)

By Paul Hollywood

Preparation time

1-2 hours

Cooking time

10 to 30 mins

Serves

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

- 500g/1lb 2oz **strong white flour**, plus extra for dusting
- 7g fast-action **yeast**
- 10g **salt**
- 60g/2½oz **butter**, softened
- 75g/3oz **caster sugar**
- pinch gum mastic powder
- pinch mahlab (also called mechlebe or mahlepi, available from specialist delicatessens or online)
- pinch ground **cinnamon**
- 1 **orange**, zest only
- 150ml/5fl oz warm water
- 150ml/5fl oz **milk**
- handful **sultanas**
- 3 free-range eggs, hardboiled in their shells with red **food colouring**
- 1 free-range egg, beaten for **egg wash**

Method

1. Put the flour, yeast, salt, butter and sugar into a large bowl. Add the mastic powder, mahlab and cinnamon, then the orange zest. Pour in half the water and milk and mix together briefly, then keep adding the liquid and mixing until you have a soft glutinous dough.
2. Mix the sultanas through the dough, then tip out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until you have a pliable dough. Shape into a ball and rest for at least an hour, or overnight in the fridge, until doubled in size.
3. Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Divide the dough into three and roll into three strands. Plait the strips together, place on the baking tray and leave to rise for another hour, or until doubled in size.
4. Preheat the oven to 210C/400F/Gas 6. Brush the top of the bread with egg wash and push the coloured eggs into the bread. Bake for 20-25 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.